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- (iii) transporting and delivering roasted coffee to a grinding circuit;
- (iv) grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus;
- (v) with said container filling apparatus, delivering said ground coffee directly into said purged containers; and,
- (vi) sealing said containers to maximize the retention of carbon dioxide and aromatics liberated from said roasted coffee and to minimize contact of said ground roasted coffee with the air, wherein said steps of grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus and delivering said ground coffee directly into said purged containers are completed with minimal delay between successive steps to minimize the loss of carbon dioxide gas liberated from said coffee prior to the sealing of said coffee within said containers.

3. The method as claimed in claim 2 including the further step of maintaining said purged containers in a generally upright position with said inert gas retained therein to thereby prevent the influx of air into said purged containers.

5. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said step of grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus is carried out within a sealed enclosure having substantially all of the oxygen therein removed.

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6. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said step of grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus is carried out within a modified oxygen depleted

atmosphere.

14. The method as claimed in claim 16 wherein said step of delivering said roasted coffee beans directly into said containers is carried out within a sealed enclosure having substantially all of the oxygen therein removed.

15. The method as claimed in claim 16 wherein said step of delivering said roasted coffee beans directly into said containers is carried out within a modified oxygen depleted atmosphere.

16. A method of processing roasted coffee beans to minimize the loss of carbon dioxide and aromatics liberated from the coffee beans following roasting, the method comprising the steps of preparing one or more containers for receiving roasted coffee beans therein, purging said containers of contained air through flushing with an inert gas and thereafter maintaining said purged containers in a generally upright position with said inert gas retained therein to prevent the influx of air into said purged containers, without delay and without allowing said roasted coffee beans to accumulate in storage bins or staging areas transporting and delivering said roasted coffee beans directly to a container filling apparatus, with said container filling apparatus delivering said roasted coffee beans directly into said purged containers, and, thereafter, sealing said containers to maximize the retention of carbon dioxide and aromatics liberated from said roasted coffee beans and to minimize contact of said roasted coffee beans with the air, said step of transporting roasted coffee beans to said container filling apparatus comprising transportation of said roasted coffee beans directly from a roasting circuit with minimal delay and minimal degasification, said coffee beans transported in an oxygen depleted environment.
